

THE
CARTHUSIAN FRIAR; K

OR,

THE AGE OF CHIVALRY.

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

FOUNDED ON REAL EVENTS.

WRITTEN BY
A FEMALE REFUGEE.

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1793.

CLARENCE HOUSE

THE ROYAL CHAMBERLAIN



TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following Tragedy, or *Dramatic Poem*, (if it be not allowed the former title) was written long previous to the Author's coming to this hospitable and blessed country, and without any idea of committing it to the press. The production of a female pen, at the early age of eighteen, will surely meet with indulgence from the generous People it is now presented to, who have so lately manifested their universal and unprejudiced benevolence. Add to this, the principal incidents that compose the piece are drawn from real occurrences, which are contained in the annals of a certain Noble Family in France, with which the Author is connected. Inexperience in stage business in every part of the world, joined to the absolute transgression of the *Unities* of the *perfect* Drama, have deterred her from hazarding it in a representation; but (if apology be requisite for its incorrectness in this point) she has surely the sanction of precedent, and the difficulty of combining a succession of circumstances within

within the strict compass allotted, to excuse the licence.

Conscious, therefore, of the danger that usually awaits on every kind of ambition, the Author renounces the flattering hope of winning the wreath of fame by the public applause. Her aim, her desires, are confined to the narrower circle of the *studious*, and, above all, the *compassionate* !—It is in the silent recesses of the closet, that she dares to court the eye of sensibility !—Convinced that her feeble endeavours will need no Patron's name to shelter them, when she reflects, that to the hearts of Britons, the plea of virtue and misfortune was ever sure entrance.

London,
January 18, 1793.

Dramatis

Dictionary of the

English Language

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Dramatis Personæ.

FATHER CELESTINE, a Carthusian Monk.

MANSOLI, a Piedmontese Nobleman.

MONTIGNY, a Peasant of Provence.

ST. CLAIR, a Priest, Tutor to Rochford.

RAYMOND, an old Servant.

THE MINISTER OF STATE.

BELMONT, } Guests of the Minister.
MELVILLE, }

THEODORE, Duke of Rochford.

EUGENIA, Duchess of Rochford, (his Mother.)

JULIET DE MONTIGNY.

Guards, Officers, &c. &c.

SCENE near Toulon, in Provence, except in the
third and last Acts.

THE

THE
CARTHUSIAN FRIAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Duke's Castle in Provence. A Saloon.

ST. CLAIR, RAYMOND, *meeting.*

St. Clair.

WELL, worthy Raymond, hast thou aught obtain'd?

Does Vincent still persist to quit the castle?

Raym. I think his empty terrors now give way
To his desire to serve our youthful lord;
(Heav'n bless his gracious mien!) I wonder not
That ev'n this headstrong boy already loves him.

St. Clair. He therefore stays?—But look that 'tis
most freely;

I wou'd not have restraint employ'd to hold him;
Let him go hence; if early he engage
To curb th' offensive licence of his tongue,

B

No

THE CARTHUSIAN FRIAR.

No farther spread his cowardly surmise,
Nor ev'n relate what he has here observ'd.

Raym. I much insisted, Sir, on these conditions,
And he has promised to be more discreet;
But I in nought can change his firm idea,
That 'tis defect of reason in her Grace
Which caus'd her melancholy way of life;
Nay, he once said (so bold is ignorance)
That 'twas the duty of a friend like you
To warn the Duke, lest she should do some harm.

St. Clair. Alas! good Raymond, with regret I own
I fear he is not sole in this report:
Strange for these two years past (more strange each
day)

The words and actions of her Grace appear.

Raym. Her grief for her lov'd Lord—

St. Clair. Nay, tell me not!

So long a time shou'd teach her resignation;
Besides, the amazing graces of her son
(Whom I have rear'd and taught since five years old)
Shou'd prove a comfort to her widow'd heart.
I found her, when at her request I came
To undertake the task of his instruction
Far more compos'd, although her loss was recent.

Raym. Not very recent, Sir, you've sure forgotten:
Tis thought the Duke, her husband, was no more
Ev'n ere the time of my young master's birth.

St. Clair. You much amaze me!—This I never
heard.

Raym.

Raym. I thought her Grace declar'd the whole to
you,
For you enjoy'd her father's best esteem.

St. Clair. I did, indeed, and still lament his worth!
(O had you seen her when she dwelt with him!
The morning rose, that blushes deeper sweets
After a sudden shower has wash'd its leaves,
Match'd not the native lustre of her charms;
And she was gentle as the breath of May,
Tho' with imperial majesty she mov'd.

Raym. I well remember her enchanting look
When she arriv'd (the bride of Rochford) here.

St. Clair. But to your information—Tell me yet,
Died not the late Duke here?

Raym. Wou'd that he had!
It might have spar'd us many a painful doubt.

St. Clair. Died he in battle then?

Raym. O no,—I'll tell you
All I can guess of this most sad event.
For none the truth possesses but the Duchess.

St. Clair. None but the Duchess?—How!

Raym. One dismal night
(O hapless hour) they both conferr'd together,
Then, with alarming speed, the Duke departed,
Without attendants, leaving not a trace
By which we e'er could learn where he repair'd to.

St. Clair. You know not whither, nor for what
design?

Raym. We only know he liv'd not to return :
 Yet for that last sad interview with her,
 I think it leads me to divine the cause.
 It seems he bound himself by some strict vow
 To go as pilgrim to the Holy Land,
 From whence so few, alas ! in safety come.
 (What cou'd occasion it I will not hint,
 Lest I unjustly criminate his memory.)
 But 'tis most certain to her Grace he told
 The secret motives of his mournful flight ;
 For she that very hour, with grief oppress'd,
 Fell dangerously ill : 'twas justly fear'd
 She cou'd not live to prove a mother's joy,
 Yet (prais'd be gracious heav'n !) in a short time
 Her only son was born to calm our fears.

St. Clair. Strange mystery !—Then she was ever
 silent ;
 Not ev'n pain cou'd rend the secret from her
 With which she was entrusted ?—Did no word
 Unwary pass her lips on that sad scene ?

Raym. Never that I cou'd learn.—But to her cham-
 ber
 None had admittance, save one faithful nurse,
 Who from her father's house attended her.
 She is since dead.

St. Clair. Then all research is vain,
 At least I much despair of the discov'ry,
 For from Eugenia's lips 'twill ne'er escape.
 Cold, fullen, inaccessible to all,

She

She only holds dark converse with herself,
 And measures her existence by her griefs,
 Griefs that extinguish ev'ry social sense :
 For not the sight of that engaging youth,
 The gentle, yet the noble-minded Rochford,
 Can charm her soul, or from her steal one smile :
 Sometimes, methinks, she flies at his approach,
 And sometimes, soften'd by his duteous care,
 If she consent to grant one kind embrace,
 Instant her swelling heart flows fast in tears,
 That else wou'd burst with renovated pain !
 What this can mean creates my utmost wonder.

Raym. Again, her ev'ning visit to St. Michael's,
 Where, brooding o'er her grief, a private chapel
 Secludes her from the world.—'Tis wond'rous all !—
 But soft—we talk too long : for see, she comes.

St Clair. Retire we then, lest we shou'd fright her
 hence ;

I will accost her at a fitter season.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Enter EUGENIA with a letter.

She reads.

“ Words can but feebly paint the agitation with
 “ which I address you !—Beset with doubts, and
 “ alarmed at your growing affliction, I know not
 “ whether

“ whether to proceed or to forbear. Can it offend
 “ you to request an explanation?—Or am I un-
 “ worthy to share a painful portion of the sorrow
 “ that oppresses you?”

Enough, enough!—My child, my Theodore!
 Ah, cease to tempt me with this moving language!
 What wou’dst thou ask?—Unconscious as thou art
 Of all that might succeed my rash compliance!
 Confide my woes to thee?—O let them sleep,
 For once awak’d, they must o’erwhelm us both:
 Too oft, alas! ere thy affection sought
 The dang’rous trust, I long’d to tell thee all.
 But, for thy sake, I will not, must not speak!—
 Rather in silence, with this fading form
 Let ev’ry anguish hush’d to peace descend
 To the cold couch of death!—Yes, cruel paper!
 Thou hast recall’d ideas fraught with peril;
 Here let me bury thee—where thou with them

[Puts it in her bosom.]

Deep hid, unseen, may’st feed upon my heart,
 Where many a wound from sorrow’s vulture-tooth
 Already bleeds, now grown too wide to heal!

[Weeps.]

Enter ROCHFORD (he kneels to her.)

My son!—O Heav’n!—

[Turns from him.]

Roch. I see my error, madam.

[Rises.]

You have not deign’d to answer or to read

My

My rash request—I own, it was presumptuous,
And I forbear to move you on that theme.

Eug. (aside) Assist me, some kind pow'r!

Roch. Yet hear me farther,
(I must intreat your patience for this once.)
Since I afford no joy to your retirement,
Since I have not the happiness to boast
The sad permission to console your grief,
But rather view'd as an intruding spy,
(At least avoided like one) let me leave you.
I may become more worthy your esteem,
For now the world to me's an untry'd desert:
Let me explore those paths where fame is earn'd,
And shew my country Rochford is in being.
I'm just eighteen—'tis time I view'd new scenes—
The genial sun that warms my native soil
With shame renews his circling course so oft,
Alone to witness when he shines on me,
A heart that vainly burns to be renown'd,
Yet wastes in wishes.

Eug. Whither would'st thou go,
Too enterprizing boy?

Roch. Are there not armies?
Are there not fields of honour for the brave?
Are there not cities where the bounteous hand
May cheer fair industry, or soothe distress?
(At least I've read of such)—But my ideas
Are like my books, perhaps—of ages gone.

Eug. Canst thou abandon me?

Roch.

Roch. Heav'ns! what a question?
 Can one, discarded by unkind neglect,
 Who feels his presence rather shunn'd than lov'd,
 Ere think in parting to awake regret?
 Have I the smallest reason to believe
 That bosom, where the tyrant Grief usurps
 The sole dominion, feels for Rochford's lot?—
 In helpless years (alas! why did they pass
 So fleeting, like the vapour o'er the stream)
 I was most happy—you were anxious then!
 How have I since deserv'd this cold aversion,
 That even petrifies the warmth of nature
 To hard insensibility, and chills
 The very source of tenderness!

Eug. O cease,
 In mercy cease!—Wrong me not thus, my son!
 How hast thou misinterpreted my sadness!
 If I have spar'd thee the afflicting stroke,
 If I have fear'd to dash thy early sports
 And active innocence with horrid themes;
 If I have rather shunn'd thy searching eye,
 Lest thou shou'dst catch the woe that hung on mine.
 (These are the only proofs of my aversion.)
 If they be such, fly from these widow'd arms.
 And doubt lest dire contagion lodge within them!

[*Embraces.*

Roch. Again, again I live!—Thou art my mother!
 Thus let me clasp thee to my beating breast,

Too

Too long a stranger to maternal fondness.
 And oh ! let calm tranquility succeed
 To those emotions I have caus'd to rise !
 Yet still I bless the hour that thus restores
 A tender union to our future days !
 No more I ask thee to unlock thy heart,
 Or break the sacred seal that hides thy griefs,
 For I will weep them with thee, though unknown,
 Watch in strict silence ev'ry falling tear,
 And mix my sympathetic sighs with thine !
 This be our life till time shall pour its balm
 Upon that wounded breast.

Eng. Thou best of sons !
 Thou gift of worth unspeakable from heav'n !
 How shall I thank thee for this gen'rous care ?
 How tell thee what my bosom feels for thee ?—
 Ah ! let these tears, the incense of pure joy
 (Which I have never known since thy first days)
 Explain the soft sensation more than words !
 But—thou hast wak'd me from a dang'rous slumber.
 I will not sacrifice thy noble spirit
 To such a mournful task. Go—view the world—
 Thy ardor's just—I wrong thy soaring mind
 By this retreat, ill suited to thy years :
 Thy rank demands a wider sphere to move in.
 Travel to court—St. Clair shall go with you :
 The minister's much bound to serve my family,
 And will receive you, I dare answer, nobly.

Rock. Yes, you recall once more my eager thoughts.

My dreams of greatness I'd pursue with joy,
 Cou'd I but hope to see you happy first.

Eug. My happiness must be thy work alone,
 And thy renown is what I most desire.

Roch. Then I obey : but let St. Clair remain :
 He may contribute to your service here,
 And his infirm and failing age begins
 To make him quite unequal to those changes
 My eager curiosity requires.
 O do not weep—this is no theme for grief—
 Think I wou'd die to spare those precious drops !
 Give not such graces to this silent sorrow,
 Lest I abjure all joy as most uncomely.

Eug. I will be calm—Consider well, my child,
 There lurks an host of dangers in the way
 Of this first trial of a busy world,
 And thou wou'dst rush unarm'd amongst them all,
 Yet, as it seems thy bent, for two years travel ;
 Then come again to cheer my drooping heart,
 And—what can be reveal'd of the dark secret,
 Perhaps—yet, I forbear to promise !

Roch. Ha !

Eug. Does it alarm thee ?

Roch. Why ?

Eug. (Presaging fears !)
 Wilt thou forsake me too ?

Roch. Forsake thee ! Heav'ns !
 And do you doubt again ? How shall I prove

The

The truth of this devoted heart to thee?
I will not leave thee till thou art assur'd—

Eug. Swear that thou wilt return—I ask no more.

Roch. By that eternal Pow'r who dwells above us,
By all those stars that spangle heav'n's high dome,
And by that silver orb, half hid in clouds,
Which he created to illumine night,
I swear, thou shalt behold me, if I live,
Before two years be wasted.

Eug. Yet one word.

The court that you would visit is adorn'd,
If true their fame, with many gallant youths:
I need not bid thee emulate their praise
For real valour; it now warms thy breast;
Nature there planted it, and gave thee force
As well as stature, ev'n beyond thy years;
But in the path of honour if thou mean'st
To be distinguish'd, or to gain the prize—
Observe me well.

Roch. I do.

Eug. Practise—the sword! [Starts.

Roch. You start!—mysterious hour!—why tremble
thus?

Why heaves that bosom like the swelling sea
When tempest-shook?—Explain this horror!—
Speak!

Eug. I cannot—Fly me!

Roch. Never!

Eug. Ah! thou know'st not—

Roch. Instruct me then.

Eug. Offspring of sorrow! No.

Thou yet may'st happy live—and shall my voice—

Roch. What wou'dst thou say?—O do not rack me thus!

[Eugenia pauses a moment, then turns to go; he attempts to follow her.]

Eug. Remain, I charge thee! *(in a solemn tone.)*

[Exit.]

Manet ROCHFORD.

Whither shall I turn?

To what dire region of despair and woe

Has she transported me?—Before my eyes

Ten thousand horrid phantoms swim at once,

And ev'ry object takes a form obscure!—

But tears, (yet unacquainted with these lids)

Half-doubting, hang suspended by amaze,

And dim my senses.—Do I wake?—Where am I?—

Was it my mother that just parted hence?

Her voice yet trembles on my wond'ring ears,

Her sighs yet penetrate my beating heart!—

Did she not say, "Practise the sword!"—What then?

'Tis here! *(draws)*—I grasp it—none shall wrest it from me!

But why with that command feel such emotion,

As made affrighted speech forsake her lips?

Thou shining mischief, if thy very name

Be

Be fraught with so much terror, sure thy point
Must be of future deeds unheard-of capable !
But when or how ?—Dark shades of doubt involve,
And not a gleam appears to guide my thoughts !

Enter ST. CLAIR.

St. Clair. Whom dost thou seek with such a
vengeful look ?

What, arm'd, my Rochford ?

Roch. (turning to him) Ha !—thou art well met.
What did she mean ?—Nay, tell me instantly—
Trifle not with my pain, though thy sage sight
Pierces the gloomy mist which I am lost in.

St. Clair. Beloved Rochford, be thyself—I know
not.

Roch. 'Tis false ! thou know'st it—But malicious
age,

Despising youth, wou'd see it waste in torture,
Lest its rude strength should hold your counsels vain,
Nor bow obedient to your jealous tyranny !

St. Clair. Does Rochford speak these words ?—
unjust and rash

As these reproaches are, they move me not.
Yet hast thou quite forgot those tender cares
I lavish'd on thee since thy early days
To love, instruct, advise thee ?—Yes, ungrateful,
Think that thou owest—

Roch. Spare my heart this 'count.
I know the debt's too vast to be repaid—

Thank

Thanks were but poor!—Forgive, forget, if possible,
Most excellent of men!—I'm scarce myself—
Yet add this kindness to the past, and hear
What has well nigh distracted me.

St. Clair. Alas!

I have a mournful reason to foreknow
A part of it—but speak and ease thy heart.

Roch. Can words convey it?—'Tis a tale so sad!
And yet it promises mysterious good.

St. Clair. Unfold it freely.

Roch. Let me recollect—

My mother—('tis of her that I wou'd tell thee)
I watch'd her coming.

St. Clair. When?

Roch. But now.

St. Clair. Proceed.

Roch. There was no other way—we spoke together—
Brief—She consents I shou'd repair to court—
Grew calmer then, prescrib'd my stay, and promis'd
To tell me all her griefs—retracted then,
Resum'd again, but, with a falt'ring tone,
Oft seem'd to doubt—at length enjoin'd me next
To learn the sword—then ceas'd—but still her eyes
Half told some sequel dire!—with broken words,
Thrice she essay'd to answer my impatience,
Bow'd unto heav'n, with a desponding look,
Sigh'd, bade me stay, and vanish'd.

[*Lets his sword fall, and muses.*

St.

St. Clair. 'Tis most strange!
Time may, perhaps, reveal this hidden truth;
Till then enquiry must be vainly us'd.

Roch. No more of this—reflection but augments
The mystic darkness of this night's conjectures;
For I have wander'd 'midst a fearful train
Of doubts and horrors—But too much of these.
Give me my sword—I nothing am without it—
On that my future merit much depends! [*Puts it on.*
To-morrow I'll away,

St. Clair. So soon!

Roch. 'Tis fix'd,
The night flies fast, and thou hast need of rest.
Farewel!—Be happy!—May the gentle hand
Of kind Felicity smoothe ev'ry step,
And lead thy future life thro' paths of flow'rs.

St. Clair. Farewel! (*embrace*) and yet I cannot part
with thee
So suddenly—I must attempt at least
To warn thy youth against a court's deceit.
Within we may confer.

Roch. Forgive me now;
I'm much disturb'd. By letters thou shalt learn
The earliest news of me and of my fortunes.
Good night. [*Going.*

St. Clair. Heav'n be thy guide. [*Rochford returns.*

Roch. A moment yet—
As thou respectest heav'n, or holy rites,
I must entreat—Be watchful of my mother!

Quit

Quit her not when I'm gone—By all that's wretched,
There is a dread idea haunts my mind—
If any weapon——

St. Clair. Yield not to those fears,
For in her bosom piety doth dwell.

Roch. I own my fear unjust—Once more, farewell.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT,

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A Cottage.**Enter MONTIGNY and JULIET, with a book in her hands.**Montigny.*

I Tell thee, daughter, it must have an end:
 I am a plain rude man, a peasant born;
 To serve heav'n thankfully, and rear my vines,
 Is my extent of science. Wherefore then
 Should my sole child aspire to be enlighten'd,
 And strive to know what cannot useful prove,
 But spends that time she might employ more fitly.
 Where education makes one mind the better
 It ruins twenty—such are my ideas.
 But since you're grown acquainted with high reas'ners,
 'Tis likely you despise them as they're mine.

Jul. O do not chide thus wrongfully!—none more
 Than I can feel my error and unhappiness.
 I know not how to speak to you—so much
 You find my language foreign to your ears.

D

Yet

Yet as you now have pierc'd my very heart,
By these complaints, I must reply at last.
Accuse me not of such a sin unheard,
As that of harbouring contempt in aught
Of you, my father, my surviving parent !
If you shou'd cast me off, where shall I find
A refuge for my youth ? where seek for aid ?
But if by reading only I offend,
I pray you recollect 'twas your consent
Engag'd this charitable priest to teach me :
It was his custom (in those vacant hours
When from the castle he pursu'd his walk)
To visit many poorer roofs than our's,
And hold discourse with all on pious subjects,
Led by the dictates of humanest zeal.
He came to you—('tis near three years ago)
With pity he beheld my artless youth,
And deign'd to question me. I know not how,
Yet my replies made his indulgent goodness
Think me not quite unworthy of his care :
For from that hour he form'd the gen'rous plan
Of giving my rude mind the happy means
(As I then thought them) to improve itself.
Nature it seem'd had graven in my heart
Desire of knowledge ; for tho' all day long,
Or in the vineyard or the house employ'd,
I cheerfully forgot my toils to learn :
But since you view this as a fault in me,
I do protest it was involuntary.

Mont

Mont. No, I had nothing said, believe me, Juliet,
If this good man had limited his pains
To teach a peasant's child to read her pray'rs :
It had been charity—but for what end
Bring all those chronicles of times long past,
And fill her head with kings and states o'erturn'd,
Stories of maids like thee, who martial'd troops,
Wars and rebellions ; (for 'tis all I hear,
Or all I comprehend in your late lessons).
Then again—monstrous fables, quite unchristian,
Sung into rhyme, and paper vilely scrawl'd,
Where he pretends to shew the world at once.
All this mislikes me—and I do begin
To think him less devout than dangerous.

Jul. Nay, father, be but just—his age and morals
Thro' all the country contradict your fears :
And if my studies pass'd his first design,
'Tis I, not his instructions you shou'd blame :
Long had he now concluded, but for me ;
For still unsatisfied, whate'er I learn'd,
He hop'd to check me in my eager search
By themes to me obscure, and therefore try'd
The grave historic annals of past days.
Yet tasting these, he cou'd not then with-hold
The needful charts (which most your anger move)
For did I read of some well govern'd state,
Or of some chieftain mourn th' untimely fall,
I still enquir'd, where such great actions pass'd ?
How distant such a realm ? where flow'd such seas ?

Or of their cities what was spar'd by time?
 This I confess (but let me farther urge
 The only plea I have for my excuse)
 Have I neglected any household care,
 Or from your side e'er wander'd in the field?

Mont. Thy diligence indeed surprizes me,
 But still 'tis fit thou should'st give over books;
 For they begin to steal that lively bloom
 That healthful glow'd upon thy cheek of late;
 It must not be—for thou art even chang'd
 Since I was forc'd to leave thee some few days,
 And speed to Toulon, whence my brothers sail'd.
 I well suppose you spent both night and day
 With poring over this beloved lumber.

Jul. Alas!

Mont. How now!—thou art not well.

Jul. I am not.

Mont. Why so?

Jul. You went to Toulon—I remain'd.

Mont. And what of that?—Did any ill befall
 thee?

Jul. O do not search the reason of my griefs,
 Unless thou can'st as surely give their remedy!
 Unless thou canst invoke some pow'r divine
 To banish shame, which holds my tongue enchain'd
 When I wou'd speak of them.—O Rochford, Roch-
 ford!

[Weeps.]

Mont. Is it the Duke thou mean'st?—I bode some
 evil——

Yet

Yet he's esteem'd most noble.—Say, how was it?

Jul. Ask me not that—for I as soon can think
How the bright sun thou'd lose his golden beams,
How the warm summer turn to killing frost,
Or the pure fountain prove a pois'nous draught,
As e'er divine how Rochford can be guilty!

Mont. I have a fatal guess—but grief is vain,
If thou art lost—

Jul. Ha! think'st thou it possible?—
How thou mistak'st me!—I attest high Heav'n,
And those chaste spirits ministr'ring above,
That I have still preserv'd myself unsullied!

Mont. Why then alarm me thus?—Why talk of
shame?

Jul. Feels then the heart no shame but infamy?
The base suspicion wounds a spotless mind:
O, my dear father, were I such a wretch,
I wou'd have met thee ere thou cou'dst enquire,
Told my despair, and shunn'd the light for ever!
But 'tis for Rochford's sake these blushes rise,
For his great soul, in one sad moment made
A slave to baseness and unworthy passion!

Mont. I understand thee not—sure thou dost dream?
Why else speak of the Duke, our Lord and master,
With such enthusiastic, fond presumption?
I well remember me, he sometimes came
(Tir'd of a lonely life) to hear thee read,
(For of thy learning much had been the talk)
Yet it was seldom, and his tutor staid

And

And witness'd all that pass'd ; nay, seem'd well
pleas'd :

I hope he has not harbour'd other thoughts :
For ah ! my child, the Great will be obey'd,
Or make their vassals feel their disappointment.

Jul. Fear not.—O, cou'd I tell thee all my pain !
And yet I must—to hide it were transgressing.
From those first fatal visits of the Duke,
The hapless, lowly Juliet touch'd his heart :
(Ah ! let this seeming vanity not change
Thy perfect faith in what I now unfold,
Though it may well excite thy utmost wonder)
The sage St. Clair with watchful eye perceiv'd
Ere Rochford's self, this inauspicious flame,
And long averted all this scene of woe.
But when your cruel absence had expos'd
This unsuspecting heart to all its suffers,
Scarce were three days complete, when I beheld
The youthful Rochford seek my lonely cot :
Blooming in all the pride of graceful years
He came, to tell me such a tender tale !
Breath'd such soft sighs, and such persuasive vows,
That ev'n now, by mem'ry trac'd again,
The fainter image fills my frightened soul.
But, oh ! he ask'd in fond exchange for these—
(Can I express it ?)—what no wealth should buy !
The foul affront restor'd me to myself—
I started !—wak'd from the first luring dream,

Bade

Bade him be gone!—while yet my rage had pow'r,
Then—flight confirm'd the conquest virtue claim'd.

Mont. How hard is poverty! that e'en suspends
The joy with which I wou'd this act applaud,
Shewing dark ruin as the fruit.

Jul. Forbear!

Nor cast one thought on this ideal dread,
But rather look with horror on those ills
Not time itself cou'd cure, if I had yielded.
Yet (that I may not boast my fame preserv'd
Alone by firm resistance) some kind Pow'r
Gave in that very Rochford that I fear'd,
At once my foe and my most sure defence;
For yet, he felt some spark of purer climes,
And pleaded the necessity of rank,
To veil his rash request with honour's name;
But I most haply rous'd his gen'rous soul,
Thus arm'd against himself, and bade remorse
Succeed the transports of misguided passion.
He left me, musing, pierc'd with deep despair!
With looks that as I speak seem present still—
'Tis he himself!

Enter ROCHFORD.

Mont. Alas! he comes indeed!
We are undone, my child!

Jul. (to *Mont.*) Be firm, I pray you!
Alas! my Lord, why seek this homely dwelling?

[to *Roch.*
Does

Does not its conscious poverty recal
 The keen reproaches of your wounded greatness?
 Or shou'd this visit be vindictive meant?
 If so, prescribe my punishment—I yield
 Without a murmur, to appease your wrath—
 But cast not ruin on that aged head,
 He has not shar'd—

Roch. My life, my dearest Juliet!
 Why this desponding softness, that o'er shades
 Those eyes, that else might chace the night's dull
 gloom,

And make Aurora pale!—Look not on me
 As on some fierce invader seeking prey,
 But him thy charms once tempred to offend,
 Yet whom those very charms reclaim'd, and taught
 To worship thy pure mind, still far above them.

Jul. If then one thought in your own noble nature
 Pleads for my innocence, this language cease.
 Here part we, mutually resolv'd to shun
 The dreadful brink on which we both have stood!

Roch. No, Juliet, thou art injur'd—This attempt
 Of my rebellious love, gives thee a right
 To ask of me whatever reparation
 Can heal th' insulted dignity of woman.

Jul. My injuries, my Lord, most small appear
 To those which your own bosom has sustain'd.
 For list'ning but one hour to flatt'ring vice,
 You thus endanger'd all your future life!
 Broke thro' that sacred bar kind Heav'n had plac'd
 Betwixt

Between your heart and crimes too black to mention:
 Thou, like a treach'rous guard, unlock'd the citadel,
 Gave entrance to the foe, who, tho' repuls'd,
 Without strict watch may find his way again.

Roch. Thou paint'st my failings in too gentle terms:
 Why hast thou not resentment in thine eye?
 Why frowns not indignation on thy brow?
 That for awhile at least I might despair
 Of that forgiveness I've not yet deserv'd.
 But there remains one way.—Nay, list, Montigny,
 Does then my presence fright you?

Mont. My good Lord,
 I wait your Grace's pleasure.

Roch. Thus 'tis then.
 Hear, Juliet!—Hear, ye souls who honour virtue!

Jul. What means my Lord?

Roch. Send for the curate straight—
 The vain remonstrances of rank and pride
 (That weigh'd too much with me before) are past:
 Give but thy faith to me—be mine, my Juliet!
 Nay, quickly send! for the impatient hours
 (That borrow when I'm near thee swifter wings)
 Chide my delay, ev'n in love's righteous cause.

Mont. Does my Lord mean to try his lowly servants
 By such discourse?

Roch. Talk not, but pr'ythee go. [Exit Mont.
 Speaks not my Juliet?

Jul. Pardon me, my Lord—
 But that ten thousand sentiments at once

Make language inexpressive, I wou'd speak,
 To tell my Lord his words have reach'd my heart—
 But, lost in wonder, scarce I dare to trust
 The evidence of thought.—Is it then possible?

Roch. Most certain, my lov'd Juliet—What can
 hinder?

Tho' my rever'd St. Clair (in this deceiv'd)
 Already has oppos'd thy humble birth,
 His arguments have nearly prov'd my bane.
 I cannot live without thee—and must owe
 Or to a crime, or to a noble act,
 The dear felicity of thy possession,
 Let me not hesitate to chuse of these
 The way my heart desires, thy worth demands.
 Smile only thou upon my vows, 'tis done.

Jul. Then, thou most generous!—I joy indeed,
 To have the pow'r to pay in part this bounty!
 Take back thy vows, take back thy proffer'd rank,
 It is not fit that Juliet should receive them!

Roch. Thou wrong'st me—Love and justice—

Jul. Both are satisfied!
 Born as I am, obscure, so far beneath you,
 I will not add to my unworthiness
 T' accept a gift so great, and in return
 To bring thee nought but universal blame.
 No—I acquit thee of all future ties;
 It is an honour far above my hopes
 Th' illustrious Rochford's freedom to confirm,
 To think he lives, indebted to poor Juliet!

Let

Let me enjoy this triumph—'tis enough—
And be the rest forgot, [Going.]

Roch. Stay, Juliet, stay!
Bereave me not of all my comfort thus!
This day, this cruel day, I'm forc'd to leave thee,
Repairing hence unto a dazzling court;
Be mine before we part!—Thy lov'd idea
Shall be my shield against ensnaring falsehood,
And keep the bosom it inhabits pure!

Jul. For court this day?—Heard I, my Lord?

Roch. This day.
Nay more, my life—I have a vow to Heav'n
To make this separation last two years:
Ha!—does this parting cost thee one kind sigh?
You tremble, Juliet!—Grant me what I ask,
And be in absence my angelic guard!
Or shou'd disastrous Fate—Weep'st thou, my love?

Jul. For pity, let me go—(disturbed.)

Roch. Why stays Montigny?

Jul. I had forgot—Think not of that again.
My fix'd resolve is register'd above,
And makes thy stay in vain, if not disgraceful.

Roch. O moment interwoven with joy and misery!
Dost thou then love me, yet deny me, Juliet?
Thy beating heart, thy beauteous down-cast eyes,
That on thy bosom show'r such crystal drops,
(Bidding it mock the lily wet with dew)
All tell me I am not unfavour'd there!
Yield then, unblushing, to their tender plea,

Nor rend thy gentle soul with all this strife.
 Who will applaud (if that be thy sole aim)
 When thou hast cast love's choicest gifts aside ?
 Is it thy aged Father ?—Surely not :
 For thou canst rescue him from painful toil
 By thy compliance. Is it thy own heart ?
 Ah ! thou deceiv'st thyself too tender Juliet !
 When I am gone, will no soft wishes stray—

Jul. (kneeling) Hear my distress, thou succour of
 the weak !

Behold me helpless, wretched, bend to thee !
 To thy dread law I make my last appeal !
 If thou hast sent me to this arduous trial,
 To be the proof by which thou wilt dispense
 Thy future grace or future wrath on me,
 Give added firmness to this wav'ring heart—
 Support me, or I fall.

Enter ST. CLAIR and MONTIGNY.

St. Clair. What do I see ?

Roch. Thou see'st of all her sex the brightest gem,
 Long hid in a remote, neglected cavern ;
 And see'st me, bent to search the dark recess,
 And wear the jewel nearest to my heart !

Jul. (to St. Clair.) O thou wert surely sent for my
 deliv'rance !

How cam'st thou ? Sure thou didst presage some ill !

St. Clair. Close by the castle gate I met Montigny,
 With

With joyful look, and speed unknown to age;
 I stopp'd to ask the reason of his haste,
 When I perceiv'd him hesitate to speak it,
 And by more questions drew the truth from him:
 But peace with thee, fair maid, I charge thee not—
 'Tis thou, degenerate youth, or rather madman,
 Whom I must talk with.—Canst thou look on me,
 And not feel shame seize on thy ev'ry finew?
 Two hours ere noon for thy departure fix'd,
 Yet now the sun high climbing in his sphere
 Darts on the earth almost meridian rays,
 Still art thou here, and here on what account?
 Where are thy solemn vows, thy thirst for fame,
 And where, ah where! thy filial duty fled?
 Or dost thou mean to hide thee in a cottage,
 In one fond dream forget thy noble views,
 Pleas'd with the blessings of inglorious love?
 For shame—I blush at such unworthy thoughts.

Roch. 'Tis well.—Hast thou yet more to add?—if
 not,

(And thou art satisfy'd with keen upbraidings)
 Hear me reply.—In part thy charge is just;
 I linger here—I struggle with my fate—
 I vainly woo delight to soothe my days,
 When heav'n reserves me but for scenes of trouble!
 But spare those terms of scorn, insulting priest!
 In purer regions shall my love be priz'd,
 Above the precepts of such narrow souls!
 For in this cruel hour, that lovely maid

Proves,

Proves, uncomplaining, all a martyr's pangs !
 And with a gen'rous fortitude rejects
 My wealth, my hand, (which I had both bestow'd)
 To save my name the censure I despise !

St. Clair. Learn then from her to value it more
 justly ;

And if this sacrifice a female makes ;
 Shew not our vaunted reason far beneath her !

Roch. I thank thee now, and am resolv'd at once.
 Yes, I will imitate so fair a guide !
 Ah ! cou'd it be a failing to adore
 That bright perfection—why hast thou conspir'd
 To cast fresh lustre on her op'ning mind,
 And fertilize the soil where genius smil'd ?
 O my heart's treasure, from despairing love [to *Jul.*
 Receive this last—Dost thou avoid my arms ?
 But I submit— [Exit *Juliet and Montigny.*

May heav'n restore again
 That gentle peace which I, alas ! have wrong'd !
 Now lead me forth !—where'er my fortunes call me,
 What can I not endure, this conflict past !
 As on a wreck from cruel storms just sav'd,
 (Spent with their rage at last, which long he brav'd
 The mariner espies some unknown shore,
 And strives through restless waves, a track t' explore ;
 Uncertain there what sands, what shelves await,
 He courts the worst, and gives the rest to fate !

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE I.

The Minister's House at Paris.

A Banquet.

MINISTER, BELMONT, MELVILLE ROCHFORD,
and other Guests at Table.

Minister.

BE welcome, worthy friends; and fill, I pray you,
To the young King, our nation's dawning hope.

Bel. With loyal zeal and truth I give th' example.

[*Drinks.*]

All. Long live the King! (*drink.*)

Bel. (to Roch.) You were presented, Sir,
To-day to the Queen Regent?

Roch. Yes, my Lord,
And am most grateful for her flatt'ring notice;

Bel. You are well form'd by Nature, gentle stranger,
To win the notice and esteem of all;
Your sentiments outshine your noble mien.

Roch. I know not how to answer you, so much

This

This kind indulgence makes mere thanks ungrateful :
 Good Count of Belmont, teach me some return,
 As you have taught my heart to feel your debtor.

Min. But we were speaking of the Queen's reception :

Indeed, young Rochford, you may well be proud
 Of such distinguish'd praises from her Majesty,
 Who is not 'custom'd on first sight to give them.

Roch. My Lord, I deeply feel her condescension,
 It needs not repetition to increase it.

Mel. I faith, I see no great phenomenon
 In all this matter ; Queens are women still,
 And woman soon is caught by brilliant forms ;
 As handsome blooming youth, like him, first seen,
 And thus admir'd—why, their ungovern'd tongues,
 Must deify the present object straight.

Roch. Permit me, Sir, to say you give me pain,
 To hear such disrespectful language.

Mel. Psha !

When you at Court have spent some few fair months,
 You'll know the justice of it by experience ;
 'Tis well for many you're unvers'd in art,
 And have not studied court-intrigue so soon,
 Or we might see you plac'd above their heads,
 A royal favourite. It may be yet—

Bel. For shame ! I beg this theme may be dismiss'd.
 Or with less freedom us'd.

Mel. What say'st, young courtier ?
 Does thy ambition fire—

[to Rochford,
Roch.

Roch. I'm in amaze!

And no less penetrated with concern
To find I am the subject of such words :
Most worthy Lords : I thought with you to meet
At least much riper judgments than my own,
But, with your pardon, I can now perceive
That from an error springs this strange dispute.
It is impossible the gracious Queen
Can find me worth a moment's admiration :
Unskill'd I am in all that can attract.

Mel. No matter : novelty has wond'rous charms ;
Besides, the native dignity and fire
Of youth, emerging from retreat, outshines
The flat, insipid tricks of practis'd sycophants.
Profit but well, you have a glorious field.]

Roch. I do protest I'm ignorant—

Mel. Well said :

Seem a mere novice, 'twill prevail more surely ;
I swear you have the wit of twice your years ;
You'd be a prodigy, if all believ'd
That doating blockhead Rochford was your father.

Roch. (*Starting from his seat*) Demons and death !
whence came those hated sounds—
Who dar'd profane the name of Rochford ?

Mel. I did.

Be still, good youth, for I tell no new tale.

Min. Have you forgot where your intemp'rate
speech

Betrays you, Melville ?

F

Bel.

Bel. Haste thee to repair
Thy rash offence.

Roch. Know'st thou of whom thou speak'st?

Mel. Why, of Eugenia, thy once lovely mother,
And of her idiot husband, who took flight,
And kill'd himself in a wild fit of jealousy,
Because, forsooth, she favour'd some gallant.

Roch. Stop that audacious tongue, vile son of falsehood!

Forgive, my Lords—my rage will hold no longer—
Revenge, revenge, good Heav'n! (*draws.*)

Mel. Be calm again;

Put up thy sword, thou canst not match me yet.

Bel. Dear Rochford! (*holding him*) for the sake of
all you love,

Be not thus rash, nor think t'expose your life—
'Tis wine that now subdues his erring reason.

Min. If truth and decency have lost their sway,
At least our presence shou'd prevail—Begone!
Not in this house the Duke shall be insulted.

Mel. With all my heart—Farewel, good Duke of
Rochford! (*sneering.*)

Roch. Turn, Melville—if thou dost not mean to
add

To thy injustice all a coward's baseness,
Arm thee in thy defence!—Plead not my youth:—
I can forgive thee, if I fall—But now
The bolts of heav'n were mercy to thy words!

Mel.

Mel. Thus then—(*draws*). Repent thee, stripling.

[*Fight—Belmont, &c. strives to part them.*]

Min. Call for guards,

And seize this bold invader of our peace.

[*Exit a servant.*]

[*Melville wounds Rochford in the arm. The*

guards are entering when he escapes.]

Bel. He's fled!—Dear youth, dost thou not bleed?

Roch. But little—

'Tis but a trifle to the wound within,

Which till I find my foe can never heal!

O Fortune, fortune! [*Leans on his sword.*]

Min. Pray repose yourself—

You shall have justice, on my honour,

Roch. How!

Shall I commit an injur'd parent's cause

To any other arm?—Tho' mine shou'd fail,

At least I'll die to vindicate their wrongs!

That villain Melville!—Why, ah why, just heav'n!

Didst thou not give my sword, for such a strife,

The lightning's swiftness and the tempest's fury?

Ah! mother, thy last words were sure prophetic!

“Practise the sword!”—Too soon, too much I need

it!

But vengeance, yet unsatisfied, shall lend

This inexperienc'd arm Herculean force!

I feel, I feel, tho' art deny'd its aid,

When next 'tis rais'd vile calumny shall tremble,

F 2

That

That daring slander shall affrighted shrink,
And prostrate meet the blow that's but delay'd !

Bel. Ah, calm this noble indignation now,
Look to thy wound—does it not bleed apace ?

Rock. No, worthy Belmont. Canst thou not perceive

Why thus unwilling flows the crimson tide ?
Chill'd by the horrors of that villain's tongue,
The vital blood runs backward to its source,
As it were conscious 'twas most needed there,
To bear the weight of woes that press upon me,
And will not waste one drop that may support them !

Min. Retire awhile.

Rock. 'Tis Nature gives the lesson !
And I will fly to shield thee from alarms,
Source of my being !—But I'll first pursue
Detested Melville, to redeem thy fame.
Give him, oh, give the traitor to my rage !—
My father's memory, my mother's virtue,
Stabb'd at one stroke !—Can I forgive the wretch ?
Never, oh, never !—Were there plac'd between us
Unnavigated seas, fire-fed volcanoes,
All hostile elements in ceaseless jar,
With dread Deformity's most horrid shapes,
Whoever blots their name with foul reproach,
Shall not escape my dauntless arm again.

[*Exit, followed by the rest.*]

SCENE

SCENE II.

The Country in Provence, near Rochford's Castle.

Enter ROCHFORD, with a Scarf tied round his arm.

Roch. Vain is the search which would detect that villain,

That murd'rer of my rest—then vain my stay—
How live dishonour'd by his bare suspicions,
And meet the doubting glance of fawning courtiers?
Till I assert the truth by right of arms,
I bear the blot!—Ha! if it should be just!—
Some dismal cloud hangs o'er my birth, 'tis sure.
My life began in mourning, ev'n that age
Of playful innocence was dash'd with pain.
My little sportive mates, tho' born to serve me,
Talk'd of their fathers—I, alas! had none!
I knew not what they meant—but yet my heart
Told me that they were richer far than me.
How heav'n depriv'd me of him till this hour
Ne'er have I heard explain'd—St. Clair himself
Seem'd much perplex'd whene'er he spoke of him—
And then, (oh, heav'n!) my mother's sullen sorrow!
The dreadful hints of some terrific secret—
Her parting look, her fears, all, all, confirm it—
Wretch that I am!—The shame, the scoff of Nature,
Where shall I fly to bury my disgrace?—

Why

Why came I back?—Hold—let me not reflect—
 If it be true, if such a stain she wear,
 Does not fair semblance aggravate her crime?—
 My father fell a victim to his doubts,
 And on himself aveng'd (as late I've learn'd)
 What on her head more justly—Ah!—I rave!
 Condemning her, I look not on myself!—
 No longer Rochford—ah! what am I then?
 I shudder at th' idea of my state,
 And dare not utter what I am become.
 Must I then lose that name I gloried in?
 So early lose it?—Can no proof be found
 Which may decide my future peace or ruin?
 My swelling heart bespeaks no base descent,
 It hates existence with dishonour stain'd
 Seems not my mother all that's good and perfect?
 Why then—But she alone can clear this mystery:
 She must, or see me perish at her feet!
 'Tis near the hour, by yon retiring beam,
 She pays her wonted visit to St. Michael's;
 Thither I'll speed, in friendly shades conceal'd,
 To wait her coming: thence resolv'd to learn,
 The final sentence which must seal my doom!

[Exit.]

SCENE

SCENE III.

A Chapel in St. Michael's Church.

A Silver Lamp pendant from the Dome; a Mausoleum on the right, near the back Scene.

Enter ROCHFORD from the opposite Side.

Hail, hallow'd roof!—Hail, sad abode of sorrow!
Long consecrated for her habitation,
Thou only know'st the accents of distress!
The dreary echo of thy vaulted dome,
And that bleak howling thro' the hollow isle,
Freeze my flow-beating heart with sacred terror;
An universal dampness reigns around me!
The massy pillars ev'n distil moist streams,
As the hard stones wept at the sight of Rochford!
Ah! does this gloom preface some dire discovery?
She comes not yet—no footsteps bend this way;
But as I tread, the very arches ring!
'Tis here, till now in solitude secure,
She pours the anguish of her soul to heav'n,
What if I hid me silently to watch
Her undisguis'd emotions when alone?
This way perhaps—Ha! does my grief deceive me,
Or do I see a monumental urn?—
Support me, heav'n!—I tremble to approach it—

Here

Here lies, perhaps, he whom I call my father !
 And I this moment trample on the grave
 That holds his honour'd dust !—Thus then I bend—
 But soft—here's some inscription may instruct me !

[Reads with emotion in a fixed attitude.

" To the memory of Theodore-Francis-Henry,
 " Duke of Rochford !"——

'Tis so, ye Pow'rs !—Why does this icy dread
 Affail my panting bosom ?—Yet, again——

[Reads again.

" And for the repose—of his beloved spirit, sup-
 " posed departed——"

Ha ! is it even thus ?—I'll read no more—
 Cruel incertitude !—I cannot bear thee !
 I must pursue the rest !—A moment yet——

[Reads.

" Supposed departed in some distant clime—whether
 " released from the bondage of humanity by that
 " Power who created it, or whether—as it is too
 " much feared—from his own frantic hand."

Enough ! enough ! already have I found
 My condemnation in those fatal lines !
 O Rochford, Rochford, violated shade !
 How shall I e'er atone my wrongs to thee !
 If here thy hapless ashes were inclos'd,
 Well might they feel disturb'd to earth's dark centre,
 And long to burst the bands that held them there,
 Compell'd to groan beneath my murd'rous weight.

Yet

Yet I have heard departed spirits oft
 Retain a mournful sense of sufferings past,
 And with vindictive horror haunt those scenes
 By former injuries detested made.
 If thus—perhaps I come to meet thee here.
 Pale victim of despair—Unhappy Rochford,
 Why dost thou hide thee? I deserve thy vengeance.
 Whom should'st thou persecute with ceaseless plaint
 But me, the living proof of thy dishonour?
 I who assume thy name, disgrace thy memory,
 And, robber like, enjoy thy vast possessions,
 Whilst thou, alas! needest the common rites
 Of charitable sepulchre!—Perhaps
 On some rude shore, some desert's sands expos'd,
 Lies thy unburied corse, by vultures torn,
 Or dash'd and mangl'd on some savage precipice!
 If thou hast pity, earth, ope and receive me;
 Thou art a mother—surely then thou hast—
 And thus on thy cold breast I cast my griefs!

[Throws himself on the ground.]

Enter EUGENIA, with a lamp in her hand.

Eug. Once more, thou dismal treasury of sorrow!
 Once more remote from ev'ry human eye,
 (As the pale miser steals to count his gold)
 I come to number o'er my store of griefs!
 Here, where my heart has lodg'd its sad complaints,

G

Where

Where only it unbinds its hidden wound,
 Again I visit thee with deeper woe!
 The mystic terrors of a husband's fate,
 Late my supreme distress, redouble now,
 With anxious musing on my absent son!
 My noble child! for thee I'll first implore,
 On bended knee, the bounteous care of heav'n—

[Approaches the Mausoleum to kneel.]

What's here?—a lifeless body!—can it be?
 Or but a phantom of my desp'rate brain?—
 It pants!—it breathes!—its essence is substantial!—
 By this faint glimmer—Oh! my child!

[Raising him a little.]

My child! *(falls aside him.)*

Roch. 'Tis she herself!—but, ah! why prostrate
 thus?—

Rise, most afflicted parent—lean on me.

Eug. Did some celestial spirit bid me live?
 Or wake I only to renew my misery?
 My son!—how can'st thou hither?—

Roch. Be compos'd :

If I have dar'd t' invade thy solemn secrecy,
 I will not trespass long on thy devotions :
 I hither came with the most earnest speed,
 Firmly to urge one last request!

Eug. What mean'st thou?

Roch. This very hour from thee to hear my doom.
 Tell me that dismal tale which thou hast promis'd.

Nay,

Nay, answer fully, and appease my soul,
That burns impatient for an explanation!

Eug. Ha! dost thou think to wrest it—

Roch. No, I supplicate:

Ah! grant my pray'rs! haste to disclose the truth,
Ere I resolve on some most desp'rate deed
To end my torments!—I am wounded here!

[*Pointing to his breast.*

A villain's tongue, more fatal than his sword,
Has struck, transfix'd me!

Eug. How thou mak'st me tremble—
Who has assail'd thee?

Roch. Waste not time in questions—
Declare my birth—I've seen my father's tomb—
(Wretch that I am!) perhaps I but profane
That tender title!—Tell me—am I—

Eug. What?

Roch. () force me not to speak what my soul shud-
ders at!

Thou surely canst divine—I have been told,
By a detested tongue, before the Minister—

Eug. (*alarm'd.*) Ha! hast thou heard?

Roch. I have, imperfectly.

Eug. From whom?

Roch. No matter—Only I conjure thee,
Let me hear thee pronounce—

Eug. What would'st thou ask?

Roch. Am I—oh, shame!—am I—the son of
Rochford?

Eug. The son of Rochford?—Oh!—

Roch. Resolve me that!

Vain is disguise—I've heard thy faith suspected—
If thou canst yet deny—Oh! heav'n! she faints:
Her prison'd soul seems anxious to escape,
Thus panting to shake off those briny drops
From sorrow's fount, that charge her weary wings.
Stay yet—conclude thy story—O my folly!

Eug. 'Tis dark!

Roch. She lives! she speaks!

Eug. Where have I been?

Who clasps me thus?—Stand off!

Roch. Be not alarm'd.

The voice of mourning shou'd be grown familiar—
Dost thou not know me?

Eug. Art thou Theodore?

Roch. Thy wretched son.

Eug. Then thou art mine indeed!

I own thee by that title—'Tis become
Thy mournful birth-right, in distress to share
A dread pre-eminence o'er all mankind.

Roch. Alas! I feel it, but I'll not complain!
'Tis not our task to dare accuse that pow'r
Who visits the most favour'd oft thus painfully;
But rather let us read within ourselves,
Whether in the deep volume of our hearts
No deed be register'd that may deserve it.
Feels she not this? (*aside.*)

Eug.

Eug. Ah! how can thy pure mind
Bear any spot, thus early to provoke
Fate's cruel shaft to wound thee:

Roch. Shall I speak? (*aside*)
I long to hear the rest—I know not how,
Unless that law be unrevok'd above
Which on the children casts the punishment
Due to their parent's sin.—Need I say more? [*Aside.*]

Eug. Hold! for the theme thou tempt'st is big
with horror!

If thus the sov'reign wisdom deals with man,
Where is kind mercy, where divine compassion?
Do they inhabit oft the sordid earth,
And quite forsake those regions whence they sprung?
Must I no longer hope to see thee blest
Because thy father——

Roch. Speak—with firmness speak—
Faint not again ere the dire tale be told!

Eug. Thou dost remind me.—In another word,
All I have hid so long were now betray'd.
The wild astonishment to see thee here
So suddenly, had banish'd my discretion:
Whence com'st thou?

Roch. From the court.—But to our purpose.
Unfold this mystery—my soul's on fire!
Already have I heard what might content
My terrible suspicions, were it not
That from thy lips I've sworn to hear my sentence.
Dost thou confess?

Eug.

Eug. Ha! what researching pow'r,
What vengeful spirit prompted those dire words?
Confess!—The fatal sound strikes thro' my heart,
And calls together such a train of thoughts,
By busy recollection summon'd there,
That scarce my shiv'ring limbs support the weight!

Roch. Ah, think, 'tis heav'n requires the painful
sacrifice—

Eug. Cease, impious that thou art—dost thou pro-
fane

Heav'n's awful Majesty, thou thus would'st make
Accomplice of this injury?—But, soft—
From sleep eternal if departed shades
Can e'en impart suspicion from the grave,
'Tis Rochford's voice that dictates thy demand!
O say, in what dread form, how didst thou learn?

Roch. Compose thy tortur'd mind—(how she di-
stracts me!)

By other means my doubts were half inform'd;
'Twas from a wretch—

Eug. (*hastily*) Was he not call'd Mansoli?

Roch. O no.—Perhaps thou know'st Count Mel-
ville?

Eug. Melville!—I know him not—What maze is
this!

Lives there another villain like Mansoli?

Was't at the Minister's?

Roch. It was, it was!—

We fought, when (curse on his superior skill)
He wounded me, and fled.

Eug. Ha! say'st thou, wounded?

Roch. Ay—but yet further tell me of Mansoli:
Perhaps he will not fly—Instruct me then—
If there be no dark reason to withhold me,
Give me to know him, and my heart is satisfy'd—
How! silent!—Cou'd I dare interpret this—

Eug. Thou hast prevail'd. Some inspiration glows
In all these transports of thy gen'rous soul!
My wav'ring mind is now resolv'd at last.
Come with me, and I will unfold it all.

Roch. Art thou then—but I dare no longer doubt
thee—

Rather am I that Rochford that I was?
Tell me but only this, and I am blest.

Eug. Thou art that Rochford whom my soul de-
lights in;
He who shall rescue innocence from wrong,
He who shall silence Falsehood's impious tongue,
Whose aid his suff'ring, injur'd parent needs,
Whose virtues quite efface his hapless fire's misdeeds!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT

A C T IV.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in the Castle, illuminated.

ROCHFORD and EUGENIA discovered sitting on a Sofa.

Rockford.

O Thou dost pierce my soul with pleasing anguish
To hear thee speak of all this fond delight,
This tender union of your wedded love,
Yet still rememb'ring they exist no more.

Eug. Whether as erst in Eden's purer days,
Some envious demon wore Mansoli's shape,
To dash that happiness he cou'd not taste,
Or whether heav'n repented to have wove
The knot connubial with too perfect bliss,
Short was the flatt'ring vision of my joy!
For this Italian (whom my husband's heart
Held next to me o'er ev'ry object dear)
Fiend-like, pursu'd me with presumptuous passion,
Ere full six months my marriage vows were seal'd,
Vows which himself had heard my lips pronounce,
(For from his hand before the sacred altar,

My

My most deluded Rochford wou'd receive me!)
 By base deceits awhile he veil'd his flame,
 Feigning at times most earnest preparation
 To seek his native land, yet still he staid.
 Friendship for Rochford long was the pretence,
 Unril he dar'd avow 'twas love for me.
 I heard the wretch with all that virtuous rage
 Which the first insult makes in woman's breast,
 And menac'd to disclose it to his friend :
 When (that insidious foe of all the sex)
 Weak pity interfer'd.

Roch. (rising) What do I hear?

Talk'st thou of pity?—How my fears revive!

Eug. Would'st thou not hear the truth?

Roch. I wou'd indeed,
 Tho' thy mysterious preface makes me dread it.

[*Sits again.*]

Eug. Prepare thee then to steel each softer sense
 Thy bosom owns ; for what I have t' unfold
 Must chill the mantling blood that paints thy cheek
 With icy horror as thou hear'st it!

Roch. Heav'ns!
 Were all thy soothing words delusive then?
 I can no longer bear these contradictions!

[*Rising suddenly, both advance.*]

Be brief, I do beseech thee!—Say at once
 I am a wretch thou blushest to behold,
 Bid me renounce what perfidy bestow'd,

H

And

And hide me, destitute, disgrac'd, forlorn
In some rude cavern !

Eug. Cease these cruel doubts—
Too plain I see thy father's ardent rage
Dwells in thy nature, gen'rous, but impatient.

Roch. I am, perhaps, too rash, too much alarm'd;
But, ah ! consider on a fatal rack
The panting victim that extended lies,
Thinks ev'ry stroke more terrible than death,
And fain would hasten the decisive blow—
Remember all my treasure is at stake,
My life, my honour, hang on ev'ry word
And thou wilt pardon my presaging fears.

Eug. Hear then, nor interrupt the wond'rous tale;
Know that in earlier days this same Mansoli
Once sav'd my husband from th' assassins' hand
While he sojourn'd at Turin. Won from thence,
He paid this service with excess of gratitude,
And blindly thought his soul without disguise.
This made me hesitate, alas ! to speak
What I foresaw wou'd stab his peace for ever.
Besides, Mansoli's base, consummate art
Feign'd such repentance, in such moving terms
Upbraided tyrant fate, implor'd my pardon,
That I believ'd him more distress'd than criminal,
And he confirm'd my error and my woes
By his departure, as resolv'd, to shun
Those painful conflicts he experienc'd here.

He

He went, and I applauded in my heart
 My fatal silence—when with new amaze,
 I saw him hither anxiously return
 To make a short abode, yet fear'd no ill
 From his deceitful heart. But, fatal change!
 Soon as he took his final leave for Italy,
 Deep melancholy seiz'd on Rochford's soul:
 Alone, disconsolate, he wander'd oft
 On yon bleak cliffs, where dashing surges foam,
 Or plung'd him in the forest's midnight shade.
 And now the lucid planet of the night
 Had only to complete her orb once more
 Ere thou wast promis'd being—O my heart!
 Beat not such wild alarm!—'Tis past, 'tis o'er—
 It cannot take reality from words
 And yet I tremble—

Roch. Ah! most hapless lot!
 'Tis at the period of my birth begin
 Your soul-subduing pangs!

Eug. O no!—In thee
 All my fond hopes are center'd—Thou wast sent
 By heav'n to pay me all I lost before.
 I will resume my narrative—a moment—
 'Twas at the close of day, fatigu'd in mind,
 Within my chamber as I late retir'd,
 And meditated on inconstant fate,
 Rochford approach'd me—sullen was his look—
 (How shall I speak what follow'd!)—Still, vain
 tears!

H 2

Still

Still do ye flow?—Is not your source yet drain'd
With ceaseless weeping?

Roch. O, abate, if possible,
These cruel agitations for my sake!
To see thee thus wou'd thaw th' eternal frost
Of that rude zone where summer never smiles,
Or teach hard adamant to melt in tears! [*Weeps.*

Eug. Reserve these sorrows yet—Thou know'st not
all—

Stern he advanc'd, and with determin'd voice,
“That thou art false,” he said, “I know too well;
“I ask thee not to justify thy crime,
“But on thy life declare thy minion's name!”—
By fear, but more with wonder seiz'd, dismay'd,
Truth fell enfeebled from my falt'ring lips,
Nor found belief, nor cou'd appease the storm!
At length, too late, alas! in base Mansoli
I mark'd to him the author of his doubts,
And told the fatal cause of his revenge—
He swore 'twas false—rage lighten'd in his eyes—
Vain were my vows—With imprecations fierce,
Again he bade me to confess, or die!
Cou'd I confess what never had a being
But in his frantic brain?—Rouz'd by his threats,
Imprudent, I reproached his base injustice—
He drew a dagger.

Roch. Ha!

Eug. Well mayst thou start!
Shrink, Nature, from the horrid image! Skies,
Darkn

Darken your glitt'ring planets as they roll
 O'er that difast'rous day!—A father's arm
 Against his future offspring madly rais'd!
 A husband's aim'd to pierce his injur'd wife!

Roch. O torture!

Eug. Here remains the direful scar

[*Pointing to her bosom.*]

Where the invading steel, ill guided, fell.
 I fainted, and he thought his crime assur'd:
 More swift than thought he fled—and, ah! too much
 Distracting reason is there to conclude,
 The same yet reeking hand, with his own blood
 Fulfill'd the tragic deed!

Roch. Can such distress
 As mine be match'd in earth's extremest bounds!
 This dismal scene seems on my sight to rush
 With living horror!

Eug. That unerring Pow'r
 Who had afflicted me, in mercy deign'd
 To heal my wound, and guard thy life in safety.
 This miracle reviv'd a gleam of joy,
 And I resolv'd in thy maturer state
 To tell thee all my wrongs, and from thy sword
 To have revenge on that accurs'd Mansoli.

Roch. And thou shalt have it!—Perish justice else,
 And universal chaos reign below!
 Nerve my young arm, some pow'r invincible!
 Breathe in me all the fire of ancient days,
 Of Rome's illustrious chiefs, or Sparta's sons!—

Off,

[Tearing off the scarf.

Eng. Alas! this noble rage while in my heart,
It kindles hope, at once alarms me too!

Perhaps the victim of unwary vengeance,

O cou'd I see thee cruelly destroy'd,

And that brave breast pierc'd by a villain's sword,

Not my life-blood cou'd expiate my crime!—

But, ha ! 'tis well—I timely thus conclude,

No farther ask—Lament thy father's error—

Know thy own right—sometimes regret my fate—

And now, while yet thou'rt safe, I leave thee.

Rock. Heav'ns!

Eug. Within a pious cloister end my days,

And blefs thee ever !

Rob. Whither would'st thou fly?

Fulfil thy great revenge—Lives that Mansoli?

Thou wilt not shelter him a second time

From the reward of guilt?

Eng. O, should'st thou fall!

Roch. Fear not.—Shall youth and native courage
fink

Beneath the point of a declining foe ?

Ah ! rather call the combat most unequal !

For on my side shall fight his troubl'd conscience,

And

And spare my sword the stain of treach'rous blood :
 But were he still possess'd of vig'rous youth,
 (As I wou'd fain he were !) why apprehensive ?
 Sure not in vain did Nature knit these limbs
 Of texture strong so soon !—Sure not in vain
 Thirsts this proud heart to vindicate my birth.
 Where dwells the traitor ?—Let me speed to find him.

Eug. He lives, my son, exulting lives, at Turin !
 Now, Fate, I am thy slave !—do thou the rest !

Roch. Away to Turin then !—a short farewell !
 When I return, I trust 'twill be with glory—
 Meantime, celestial Pow'rs, have charge of thee !

[*Exit.*]

Manet EUGENIA.

Eug. Yet stay !—ah, let me clasp thee once again !
 Perhaps no more to meet—Alas ! he's fled !
 Too ardent valour ! dost thou bode success,
 Or shine thy transports like a transient blaze ?
 Time must determine that.—O then awake,
 Be rous'd once more my pride, my injur'd fame !
 Burst forth to light, ye stiff'd thoughts of vengeance,
 Bid my torn heart enjoy ideal triumphs,
 While hope anticipates Mansoli's fall !

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

SCENE II.

The Country in Provence—Distant Mountains—Vineyards and Olives in Prospect—A Rock from whence a Fountain issues. Day-break.

Enter JULIET, with a Pitcher.

Jul. Why, why once more do these life-weary steps
Pursue their usual path?—Why do I view
Yon rosy beams divide the dappled east,
That bring to all that lives return of joy,
And but to me renewal of distress!

[Sets down the pitcher.]

Ah! hapless Juliet! thou awak'st to toil
Severer felt by thee, who know'st at once
The lot of poverty without its peace!
How different, good heav'n, am I form'd
To all I see around me!—Like to none!
As some poor shrub torn from its native soil,
Transplanted, droops 'midst rugged weeds and thorns,
And cannot blossom, thus I pine within!—
O destiny, since thou for me hast fill'd
The draught of being from thy bitter cup,
Why was my mind ill suited with my state?
Why are not my desires as abject made,
Or limited to life's necessities?
But I delay—most certain I shall prove

My

My father's anger, now grown fond to chide;
Then to the fount—I dare not reason longer.

[Takes the pitcher to the rock.]

Enter ROCHFORD, *musing.*

Roch. With doubting beam the star of morn appears

Unwillingly to shine on yonder hill:

Yet I will onward, and till day expect

My slow attendants. *[Going, not having seen Juliet.]*

Jul. *(just perceiving him, lets fall the pitcher).* O,
my dearest Lord,

Whence have my eyes this unexpected joy?

Silent!—disturb'd!—What means this change?—O
speak.

Roch. *(not knowing her).* Fair maid! I pray you
do not importune me,

I'm much in haste—but if thy suit be gold,

Use what I have and prosper!

[Throws a purse down, and exit.]

Manet JULIET.

Jul. *(after a pause.)* O, my Rochford!

And is it thus we meet?—He cou'd not know me!

Strange was his mien, as some new grief possess'd
him—

Or was it an expedient to conceal

The alter'd feelings of a faithless heart,

As ham'd perhaps to recollect that flame

Once cherish'd there for the unhappy Juliet !—
 Too cruel Rochford !—is't so soon forgot ?
 Or were it so, shou'd cold contempt succeed ?
 One word of pity sure thou might'st bestow
 Where thou hast lavish'd such a store of vows !
 It were an alms more precious than thy gold ! [*weeps.*
 Whither shall I repair ? where seek a refuge ?—
 My home each hour becomes more wretched still
 By ceaseless broils ; my father's discontent
 Contrives to charge me with his scanty lot.
 Yes, 'tis resolv'd—Farewel my native plains,
 Ye offer to my eyes no source of comfort !
 I will disguise me, find my Rochford out,
 And unperceiv'd of all wait on his fortunes !
 But soft—this gold may much befriend my speed.
 Then I will use it as my love's first gift,
 So as I 'scape discovery, thrice blest !
 To watch his steps with unexempl'd faith ;
 Nor scorn nor perils e'er again shall banish me !
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Turin.

A Chamber. ROCHFORD rises from a Table, where he appears to have been writing.

Rock. Who waits ?

Enter

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My Lord.

Roch. Is Maurice yet return'd?

Serv. Your Grace well knows he on the road fell
sick :

The sight of those dread mountains we have past
Daunted the timid boy, and caus'd his illness.

Roch. Who bore my letter to the Count Mansoli?

Serv. My Lord, your pardon—but in Maurice
'stead

I have engag'd a pretty winning youth,
Who journey'd too, and join'd us on the road :
His tongue bespeaks him of Provence.

Roch. Indeed !

And you have trusted him to bear my letter ?
It is important, and he's strange in Turin.

Serv. So are we all, my Lord ; yet I will answer
For the boy's diligence—and see, he comes !

Roch. His name ?

Serv. 'Tis Lucio,

Roch. Leave me, I would talk with him.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Enter JULIET, dressed as a Page.

Jul. (*aside*) Shield me some angel's wing !

Roch. Well, gentle Lucio,

Be not bashful, child, but speak thy message.

Jul. My Lord, 'tis written (*gives a letter*). Sure I
shall betray myself,

For ev'ry vein beats with unknown emotion,
 Yet wou'd I mark the meaning of that paper
 By its effect (*aside*.)

[*She looks stedfastly at Rockford, who reads.*

Rock. (*reading*) "The second watch—this night—
 "By the moon's radiant lamp."—"Tis well, 'tis well,
 Lucio!

Jul. My Lord!

Rock. (*in a low voice*). Hast thou the courage, boy,
 To look on naked swords?

Jul. (*aside*) O heav'nly pow'rs!

Yes, my good Lord—I'll try his purpose thus. [*aside*.]

Rock. See that thou hast, or frankly own thy
 weakness—

Deceit were dang'rous to thyself and me.

Jul. My Lord, I own, I am not us'd to fighting,
 But your commands dispose of me entirely.
 What can this mean? (*aside*.)

Rock. Thou shalt not fight, good Lucio.
 Only awake me—Fail not to obey.

Jul. No, my good Lord.

Rock. One hour after midnight.
 Then take thy sword, and follow me.

Jul. (*aside*) Undone!

Rock. Speak not my orders to thy fellows.

Jul. No.

Rock. But where I bid thee stand, remain immove-
 able!

Stir not, whate'er thou see'st, on thy existence!

Except

Except I fall, then summon my attendants,
And to the spot conduct them.

Jul. (aside) O my heart!
Canst thou support this?

Roch. (muses) Yet another word,
Lest life shou'd ebb too fast ere they arrive,
Tell them, I charg'd thee with my strict command,
That in this city not an hour they lose,
But to Provence transport my last remains.
Now leave me (*Juliet weeps.*) Be of heart, and prove
thy faith.

Jul. This is too much!

Roch. Goest thou not when I bid?
Ha! thus affected?—By th' immortal pow'rs,
Methinks——

Jul. (kneeling) My Lord, forgive my intercession!
Risk not your precious life!—I much have heard
Of stratagems within this city us'd—
Go not to-night!—The hour is most unsafe—
Perhaps beset with villains.

Roch. Calm thy terror:
Thy timid counsels, and these agitations,
Bid me almost suspect— [*Attempting to raise her.*]

Jul. I ne'er will rise
Till you have promis'd—Yes, my honour'd Lord,
Your doubts are just—'Tis Juliet at your feet,
Deny her not—

Roch. How cou'd I be deceiv'd
One instant?—Rise, thou paragon of faith!

But

But why, too vent'rous maid, why in this habit
 Didst thou thus follow, only to distress me ?
 To melt this heart with love's most tender sorrows,
 When it shou'd burn with manly indignation ?

Jul. If I've offended thee, my life is thine ;
 But ere thou strik'st, swear to preserve thy own !
 O, if within that breast I yet can move
 One spark of former tenderness—if ere
 I was the object of one soft desire,
 Encounter not Mansoli !

Roch. Cruel Juliet !
 Why dost thou raise this dreadful contest here ?
[Strikes his breast,

To have thee near me in this hour of trouble,
 When the repose of all my future days,
 Or life itself, hangs in a doubtful scale ;
 To see thee weep, to know thy wond'rous love,
 Revives such images as shake my soul
 With passions ill according with each other !
 These arms wou'd fold thee to my grateful breast,
 But that they soon must wield avenging steel.
 Fierce acts of valour shou'd engross me now,
 When my heart struggles with the sighs of fondness !

Jul. Still art thou bent to combat this Italian ?
 Defer at least—

Roch. Impossible !—For pity
 Leave me to call my scatter'd thoughts together,
 For finding thee must alter my intent.
 I go alone—I hope—

Jul.

Jul. Expect not that !
I will not quit thee, by all-sacred Providence !

Roch. Ha ! have a care !—Engage no solem vow !
It must not be—thy sex, thy fears for me
Will make thee act some madness to undo me !—
'Tis fix'd as fate—this night I meet Mansoli !—
The righteous cause I boast heav'n will protect,
Wait then in peace th' event.

Jul. O let me go !—
I will obey thee in thy utmost rigour,
Whate'er my heart must suffer, I'll observe
The dread command thou gav'st me ere discover'd,
And come not nigh, unless, (distracting hour !)
The hostile sword pervade thy noble breast—
Then, in what other bosom would'st thou breathe
Thy parting sighs but her's, who asks no more
Than just to catch them, and expire beside thee !—

Roch. O force of female constancy !—Behold,
Ye Lords of earth ! what woman's faith can do,
And blush to own ye ever could betray them !
I have not strength to grant or to deny [to her.
Thy sad request—but think thou wilt have need
Of resolution stronger than thy love !
Come not between us !—On thy life, remember.
Think that this arm unknowing may destroy thee !
When once 'tis rais'd in Nature's pious cause,
Nought can arrest the blow—not love itself !

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

A C T V.

SCENE I.

An open Place in Turin. Moonlight.

Enter MANSOLI (in a Cloak).

Mansoli.

THE clock has not yet chim'd, but I'm impatient :

I long to see this stripling who wou'd brave me.
 He cannot be, I think, abbove eighteen—
 And rashly he provokes maturer force
 To his own ruin. Let him perish then—
 My soul abhors him for his mother's cruelty ;
 But she has paid severely her offence,
 So shall her champion—Wou'd that he were come !
 Why then in spite of me am I disturb'd ?
 She sets him on—what then ?—With her shall rest
 His fate—his forfeit life, by her expos'd.
 But sure 'tis he.

Enter ROCHFORD.

Rock. Good morrow to mine enemy !
 Art thou not call'd the Count Mansoli ?

Man.

Man. (*discovering himself*) Ay.

Roch. (*drawing*) Thus I salute thee.

Man. Curb this rashness yet—

A moment ponder on thy enterprize.

Roch. Thy counsels are not needful, ev'ry law
Of heav'n and earth support the cause of justice.

Man. Art thou so ill aware of what thou seek'st?
Nor feel'st the condescension of Mansoli,
To meet a foe so far beneath his sword?
Know, I cou'd well repay thy bold defiance,
And by a hired villain have dispatch'd thee,
But as I venerate the name thou bear'st.

Roch. Insulting monster, draw!

Man. Have patience, boy—
I wou'd reserve thee for a nobler death,
Now meet it! (*draws.*)

Roch. Spare thy threats—Heav'n judge between us!

[*Fight, Rochford wounds Mansoli.*]

Man. Ha! 'twill not do—Learn from this arm—

[*Fight still, Mansoli falls.*]

Confusion!—Thou hast overcome—I feel

My vital force give way—

Roch. Repent thee then—

Revoke while yet thou canst thy foul misdeeds,
And recommend thee—

Man. O disgraceful fall!

Where's that Mansoli now that us'd to shine
In taste, in gallantry, in martial lists?

Well may'st thou glory, boy!

K

Roch.

Roch. Thou know'st not me,
To think I wou'd insult a vanquish'd foe!
For justice more than glory have I fought;
Confess thy villainy, and die forgiv'n.

Man. Alas! thy triumph is but too complete—
I must admire thee, tho' thy words convey
A sting more cruel than thy sword cou'd give,
Tho' on the point hung baleful poison!—Peace!
O conscience, what have I to do with thee?
But 'tis my curse to find I ne'er cou'd reach
The highest summit, or in vice or virtue.
Had I but strength to prove a perfect villain
I shou'd not now betray this shameful weakness.

Roch. Call it not weakness, 'tis thy only hope
To purchase pardon in this fearful moment.

Man. Hope! Pardon!—Is't for me they are de-
sign'd?

I dare not listen.

Roch. Yet thou dar'st to die!
To pass th' eternal separating bar
Of frail existence, still a slave to pride,
That madly scorns the only means to save thee!

Man. I thank thee—Thou hast chac'd a cruel
doubt
That struggled in my heart, if I shou'd strive
To wear the mask of firmness, and persist
To the last spark of life—

Roch. Dismiss the thought.

Man.

Man. 'Tis past—and to thy ear I'll now confide.
A secret time has never wrested from me.

Rock. Let me support thee—lose no time, but tell it.

Man. Yet e'er I ask thy aid, I thus declare
I've basely wrong'd the wonder of her sex,
Thy spotless mother—thy revenge is just!
And now, if life permits, I will atone
For a dark deed long hid.

Rock. Be brief, I pray you.

Man. Know then, not long before thy father's marriage,
With snares (too oft successful) I seduc'd
A noble lady to disgrace and ruin.
My passion cool'd, I left her to her woes,
With base neglect, that doubled my first fault:
To shun her sight, I journey'd to Provence,
Witness'd Eugenia's charms, and caught their flame,
Conspir'd against her peace—thou know'st the rest!
But for the hapless victim of my falsehood,
(Disown'd by her illustrious house) she fled,
To hide her shame within a cloister's gloom,
There breath'd her last—Ye racking thoughts lie still,
And let me finish—

Rock. Is there more to add?

Man. Alas! much more, ev'n now I pant for speech!
Ere she expir'd, she sent the infant pledge
Of mutual transgression to my care,
Conjuring me, by former vows, to cherish it.
Lost as I was to all humanity,

I long'd to rid me of the little wretch,
And to a peasant's wife, near thy own castle,
(With promises I never meant to keep)
Committed it, to rear it as her own.
The woman died soon after, and I heard
No tidings of the wretched child since then.
If she survive, (be that thy care to seek)
My fortune I divide in equal shares
'Twixt her and my sole nephew, now in France,
The Count of Melville.

Roch. He thy nephew!

Man. Yes;

Hast thou e'er known him?

Roch. I have seen him once.

Waste not the precious instants in delay!
Give me some certain sign to find thy daughter.
Where dwelt that peasant's wife? and above all,
Know'st thou her husband's name?

Man. My strength is spent—
If I remember, he was call'd Montigny.

Roch. Eternal Providence!—It is my Juliet!
Say'st thou Montigny?

Man. Why this sudden joy?

Roch. I know thy daughter lives, and know her
matchless!

Her mother's weakness she inherits not,
'Tho' she is lovely as the dawn of spring!

Man. My heart revives a moment at this news!

Roch.

Roch. Yet hear, and then confess heav'n's wondrous works!

Manfili's daughter lives, ador'd by Rochford!

Man. Do I not dream?—O, if these words be true,
Forget, I do beseech thee that she's mine—
My whole possessions take—I can no longer—

[Falls along.]

Roch. Ah, stay!—It sure might please thy parting soul

To bless her innocence before thou dy'st.

Man. (faintly) O cou'd that be!

Roch. It shall this instant—Lucio! [Calls,
Prepare thyself for multiplying wonders. [To Man.
Why comes he not?—What, Lucio!

[Advancing to call her.]

Enter JULIET.

Jul. Dearest Rochford,
I tremble yet with strong alarms for thee!
O let us fly together—

Roch. No, my love:
What thou hast yet to learn may change our fates.
I've conquer'd, Juliet!—but my reeking sword
Has robb'd thee of a parent!—There he lies!
Thy real father, who till now disown'd thee,
But fain this hour wou'd expiate his fault.

Jul. Can I belive these wonders?—How! my father?

In these Italian realms discover'd too?

Roch.

Roch. (to him) Behold the treasure thou hast long neglected !

Let not this habit thy belief suspend,
It was assumed—

Man. (raising himself, and looking on her.) The very
page I saw,

Who bore the fatal summons from thy hand !

Just heav'n, thou dost chastise me as I merit !

My injur'd offspring thou hast made the instrument
To hasten on my head impending fate !

O thou, for whom my heart weeps tears of blood !

[*To Juliet.*

My Juliet, kneel not—thou art well aveng'd—

And, Rochford, grant forgiveness, all is past. [*Dies.*

Jul. Do not my senses fail me ?—O my love,

Am I but now an orphan ?—how restor'd

In this sad hour—or why disclaim'd so long ?

And cou'd no other arm but thine be chose

By cruel Fate to shed my father's blood ?

Dost thou not hate me for his sake ?—Thou must—

This is the fruit I reap from the discovery,

And this the legacy a parent leaves me !

Roch. Come to these arms, and lose they terrors
there ! [*Embrace.*

Thy father liv'd a villain, but retriev'd

In his last moments our long nourish'd enmity.

He leaves thee wealthy, and more bounteous still,

To me bequeath'd thee as the seal of peace.

Pay those respectful rites which now are due

To

To his cold corse, and we'll away together,
 No more to view these inauspicious climes,
 No more to fear the frown of soaring pride,
 Taught by our sorrows past to feel for all,
 United shall our faith delight the world,
 And bid our native mountains smile with joy!

Enter Officers of Justice and Guards.

Offic. Seize on these strangers!

Roch. How! what wou'd these ruffians?

Offic. Deny that bloody deed, then ask the reason.

[Points to Mansoli.]

Are ye not Frenchmen?

Roch. We are both of France.

Is that a crime in Turin?

Offic. Not alone;

But ye have murder'd here the Count Mansoli.

Roch. 'Tis false! I slew him—By the laws of honour
 He fairly met his death.

Offic. The laws of Turin
 Allow not of these honourable crimes.

Roch. Slave, do'st thou dare condemn me yet un-
 heard,

And then presume to boast of Turin's justice?
 Justice in Turin!—where in ev'ry street
 Lurk hired villains, prompt at vice's call
 To act foul deeds, which day wou'd blush to look on.

Offic. I wou'd advise more prudence, Sir. These
 words

Against

Against the State will much endanger you,
Give both your swords. *[They disarm.]*

Jul. O my presaging heart !
We are betray'd !—Dear Sir, a moment hear—
Manfoli fell—

Offic. I question not, good youth.
I lead you where you must recite your story.

Rock. O Fortune ! art thou weary grown already
Of thy relenting smiles ?—Yet cheer thee, Juliet,
Heav'n only frowns, I trust, to shine again !

[Exeunt guarded.]

SCENE THE LAST.

A Street hung with black. Guards under Arms.

Two OFFICERS waiting.

1st Off. 'Tis near the hour the prisoner shou'd pass ;
'Twill be a piteous sight !—A fairer youth
No eyes e'er wept.

2d Off. His fate is most distressing.
Cou'd not Manfoli's daughter save him ?

1st Off. No.
Tho' she acquitted stands, th' acknowledged heiress,
She will not leave her hapless lover's prison.

2d Off. Attends the friar to confess him yet ?
Where's Father Celestine ?

Enter

Enter a FRIAR.

Friar. I come, I come.

Why am I summon'd from my dismal cell,
Which I have sworn to quit no more till death?
And summon'd but to witness bloody scenes!

Off. Good father, you already know the reason.
The prisoner is French, and you alone
Of all the convent speak the Gallic tongue.

Friar. Is he not ready?

2d Off. See, they now advance!

Enter more Guards. The Executioner with the Axe.

Then ROCHFORD and JULIET in Mourning.

(Juliet in Woman's Cloaths.)

Rock. Thus far, my wond'rous love, and now,
farewel!

Console thee, if thou canst—Cherish my memory,
But from despair, ah! guard thy gentle bosom.
Leave me!—No longer shake my firmness thus!
Let me restore those thoughts thou robb'st from
heav'n!

Jul. O talk not thus of parting!—If the axe
With barb'rous mercy will not end my woes,
Death shall unite us yet!—Our souls are wedded—

L

No

No more deprest'd by our unusual lot,
I'll call thee, whilst on earth, my lord, my husband,
And pair'd in purer climes, thus hold thee ever!

Roch. Yield to our hapless fate—tho' snatch'd so
soon

In life's warm prime, from thee and ev'ry joy,
I am resign'd. Ah! wake not in my soul
Those fond attractive images that bind
(With magic chain, that Nature's hand has forg'd)
Ev'n the most suff'ring to this frail abode!
Let me not ponder now on what I lose,
But in some angel's form expect above
To meet thy charms, thy tenderness, thy faith,
In endless love, in endless bliss conjoin'd.

Jul. Yes, we will go together!—Yet, one fear
Affails my heart—Lest mem'ry cease with being,
Lest some oblivious draught dissolve at once
With past afflictions past endearments too,
Howe'er it be, life without thee were torment.

Roch. What hast thou said!—In such a season thus
To wound thy gentle mind with doubts like these—
But calm thy mind—Heav'n is the seat of joy,
And without love no perfect joy exists!
Once more adieu!—See thy own peace—not thus,
With viewing my distress make comfort vain!
O holy friar, if thy rev'rend lips
Cou'd ere give weight to heav'n imparted truths,
Speak some sage counsel to that suff'ring angel;
Release me from this agony of love!

Friar.

Friar. Think, daughter, that we're born to feel
 the stroke
 Of rude adversity. If life's a load,
 As from the God of wisdom we receiv'd it,
 It is rebellion to despise his gift.
 Go then—submit—the pris'ner shou'd have time
 To talk with me.

Fyl. Most venerable man!
 Thou know'st the dread solemnity of vows,
 And mine are past to follow him to death!
 Then, like a widow'd dove, to sink with him—
 In one sad grave embracing, undisturb'd,
 To share my dearest Rochford's last repose!

Friar. Heard I?—or does she rave:—Art thou
 nam'd Rochford?

Roch. I am.

Friar. And of Provence?

Roch. The same.

Friar. Ah! say,
 Unhappy, lovely youth, art thou an orphan?

Roch. O do not ask—thou hast already plung'd
 Another poinard here by this enquiry!
 Who can support this aggravated grief?
 My mother!—O ye Pow'rs! what will she feel
 When some dire Messenger these tidings bears!

Friar. 'Tis so—By heav'n itself that whispers to me
 Thou art my child!—I am the guilty Rochford,
 Who now shou'd bleed, and not my virtuous son!

Rock. My father! O my oft-lamented father!
 Dost thou then live? Do I embrace thy knees?
 This is a mournful joy which I despair'd of!
 But do I find thee to distract thee thus?
 To offer to thine eyes so harsh a spectacle,
 As stains our interview?—Must one short hour
 With thy first blessing join our last adieu?

Friar. Thou must not die. But tell me yet again,
 Lives my Eugenia?

Rock. Yes. Do thou, my father,
 Bear to her all my filial tenderness!
 Comfort her sorrow—say, that I avenged her!

Friar. O never be that task reserv'd for me!
 Come on, ye ministers of death!—'Tis I
 Whom ye must sacrifice—I merit it—
 But spare, for justice sake, my glorious Theodore!

Off. It will not be—Time wastes, and he's con-
 demn'd.

Jul. Strike!—Take me first!—Your cruel hands
 that act

Such frequent slaughter, shou'd delight in blood!
 Will then no friendly point give mine to flow?
 Ye shall not touch him till you have dispatch'd me!

[*Rushing between the Officers and Rockford.*]

Off. Seize, and conduct her hence.

[*The Guards seize her.*]

Jul. (kneeling) O stab me here!
 No more I shall resist—Oh!

[*Faints.*]

Rock.

Roch. Art thou fled,
Soul of my life! divinest, fairest Juliet,
To add thy radiance to the starry sphere?
Off, sacrilegious hands!—One last embrace!—
Why do I linger now?—Come, Sirs, lead on!

Off. She does but faint; permit us to remove her.
And doubt not ev'ry care shall be employ'd
With due respect and honour in her service.

[*She is borne off.*]

Enter ST. CLAIR.

St. Clair. Do I approach thee in so sad a moment,
Much lov'd, much injur'd youth!—My life's sole
care!

Roch. My friend, how cam'st thou?

St. Clair. I took post to join thee,
A messenger of woe?

Roch. What of my mother?
Is she no more!

St. Clair. Thou say'st it.

Friar. Dreadful news! [*Aside.*]

St. Clair. Grief for thy rash departure seiz'd her
brain,
And 'mid a mother's frantic fears she dy'd!

Roch. I thank thee, Fate, thy persecution's past!—
Be gentle, if thou canst—thy quiver's spent!

Off. Dispatch, I pray you—I can grant no more.
The scaffold waits the prisoner.

Roch.

Roch. I'm ready !

Come, my St. Clair, and thou alone come with me,
To arm my mind with pious consolation.

For thee, my father, I must lose thee now,

So late restor'd !—But to thy fondest care

Let me commit my Juliet's tender youth !

If she survive, do thou support and cherish her—

Transfer to her all thou cou'd'st feel for me !

[*Embrace.*

Friar. My immolated child ! and must thou go ?

Roch. I go resolv'd !—Misfortune, take thy victim !

No more let heav'n be wearied with complaint,

But Rochford's sorrows silence all mankind !

[*Exit with St. Clair, guarded.*

Manet FRIAR.

Why stays the arrow of destruction now

To end my misery ?—But tho' invoc'd,

It spares awhile the guilty to repent !

To my dark cell (if these new woes I bear

Sink not this wretched frame) I'll yet repair,

To wait slow death, and hide my torments there !

[*Exit.*



F I N I S.



